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Arsonists Hit Site of JFK Killing

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DALLAS, July 20—The Texas School Book Depository, the site from which Lee Harvey Oswald shot and killed President Kennedy in 1963, was set ablaze briefly today by arsonists and suffered minor damage.

Dallas fire officials said the blaze, extinguished half an hour after it was discovered, was fed by gasoline that had been splashed on all seven floors of the 68-year-old building, which is near the west end of downtown Dallas.

Damage was estimated at $5,000. Apparently no one was in the building when the fire began.

The Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination of President Kennedy, reported that the shots that killed Kennedy and wounded then Gov. John B. Connally of Texas were fired from a sixth-floor window of the depository.

Recently, the depository again became the source of local controversy as several city and state officials renewed talk about acquiring the biulding for use as a public museum in honor of the late President.

The present owner, Aubrey Mayhew of Nashville, Tenn., who bought the building on April 17, 1970, for $650,000, reportedly is several months behind in his $60,00-a-month payments, and faces foreclosure.

The Texas Legislature is expected to consider a bill sometime next year that would permit Dallas and surrounding Dallas County to purchase the depository under eminent domain.

The depository has been closed since it was bought by Mayhew, with the exception of the lobby that was opened last April as an information center and for the sale of Kennedy souvenirs and symbolic pieces of land on which the building is situated.

The fire this morning was discovered by Win Anderson, 25, Mayhew's building manager, who said he saw it when he arrived to open the building. Anderson said the depository has been the object of several pranks and break-ins.

Fire officials said the blaze spread to five floors of the building but did not reach the sixth floor, from which Oswald fired the shots. Officials said the only damage to the sixth floor was caused by water and smoke.